



# Foggy Bottom News

MARCH 1986

Published for and by the citizens of Foggy Bottom

Volume 30, No. 6

## Historic District Status For Foggy Bottom: What Will It Mean

Part I

by Emily Hotaling Eig

In 1983, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A and Foggy Bottom Association jointly submitted an application seeking historic status for a five-block area within the Foggy Bottom/West End ANC. This application requested formal recognition of the historic merit of the area and its designation as the "Foggy Bottom Historic District." Composed of five squares bounded by K Street to the north, 24th Street to New Hampshire Avenue on the east, Virginia Avenue on the south, and 26th Street on the west, the proposed historic district is the area that most vividly illustrates the life and housing stock of Foggy Bottom's late 19th and early 20th centuries' working class. An important artifact of Washington's physical development, the neighborhood is significant for four reasons: 1) its association with the city's early working class; 2) its geographic and sociological relationship with one of Washington's early industrial areas; 3) its identification as one of the few neighborhoods associated with European immigrants in a city noted for its relative absence of European-American communities; and 4) the value of its architecture as a representation of the lifestyles, endeavors, tastes and successes of these people.

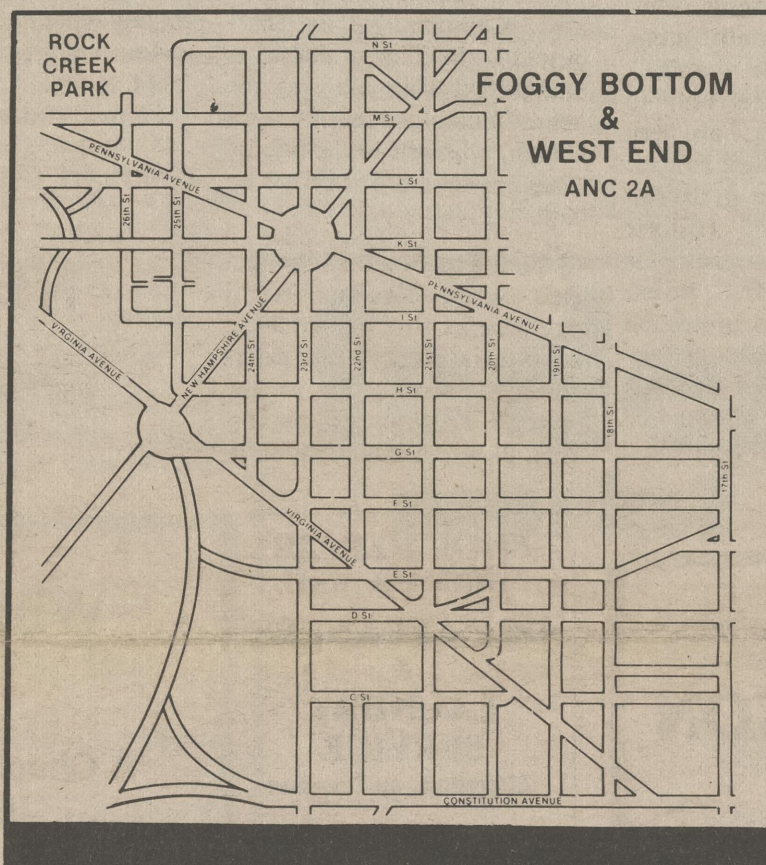
In the fall of 1985, a public hearing took place before the District's Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). At that hearing, the community presented a strong case for the historic status of the area. Although, as of early February, no decision had been rendered on the application's merits, the prospect of historic district status is one to which many citizens look forward.

**But, what will life be like living in an "Historic District?" In fact, what is a formally designated "Historic District?"**

In 1964, the newly established Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital prepared a formal list of local buildings, sites, and areas determined to possess significant architectural and historical merit in the District of Columbia. Known as the *D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites*, this list formed the basis for today's compilation of historic landmarks and historic districts. As research and study of the city continues, and historic buildings and neighborhoods receive formal recognition of their contribution to the history of the District of Columbia, the Inventory continues to grow.

In 1983, ANC-2A and the Foggy Bottom Association submitted an application seeking

(continued on Page 2)



## John Wilson To Speak

Guest speaker this month is our own Ward 2 Councilmember John Wilson, who could talk about any number of matters: his time at Harvard, the budget, the race for mayor, and city politics in general. We probably have a long list of questions for him as well, including the recent real estate assessments. Perhaps not even John Wilson can explain those irrational assessments!

But be sure to be there to hear the latest — in John Wilson's inimitable style!

## West End Library Hours

The following is for those in the neighborhood who do not frequent the West End Library, and might head there and find it closed (as I did a couple of times).

Monday and Wednesday 1:00-9:00 pm  
Tues., Thurs. & Sat. 9:30 am-5:30 pm

This branch is closed on Fridays and Sundays; the phone number is 727-1397.

## At the February FBA Meeting

FBA Vice President Holsey Handyside presided at the February meeting, and reported on the latest incident involving a bus picking up passengers from the River Inn in violation of the bus ban. Also during the meeting a resolution was passed by the Executive Board approving, in principle, the idea of a fountain to be built and maintained by the Embassy of Saudi Arabia.

The guest speaker for the evening was Jack Benjamin, Deputy Associate Regional Director of the National Park Service for the National Capital Region. He outlined the complicated background of the Georgetown waterfront project, and the parts played by the city, the Park Service, the Commission on Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission. As planned now, the park along the waterfront being designed by the Park Service will be a "passive park," with paths, benches, trees, shrub beds, open grass areas, with the Whitehurst Freeway screened by plantings.

The Park Service, according to Benjamin, has no plans for the area east of Rock Creek Parkway; is planning to reduce the parking spaces at Thompson's Boat House; is recommending architectural upgrading of the boathouse at some time in the future; is projecting that pedestrians will be able to walk from Virginia Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue by late fall 1986.

## Meeting Foggy Bottom Association

8:00 P.M.  
MARCH 31, 1986

Guest Speaker  
John Wilson  
Councilmember  
Ward 2

St. Paul's Parish House  
2430 K Street, N.W.



## Historic District Status (continued from page 1)

to add "Foggy Bottom Historic District" to that list. Specifically, this application stated a case for a specifically defined geographic area, and requested the HPRB to list the district on the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites and to recommend to the State Historic Preservation Officer (the SHPO is the District's top preservation official) that it be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. In response to this application, the District's Historic Preservation Division (HPD) staff reviewed the information and made a written recommendation to the Review Board to designate the area as an historic district. This was followed in 1985 by a public hearing before the HPRB.

Soon, the HPRB will make a decision on the significance of the area. If they vote in its favor, the HPRB will state specific boundaries for the formal "historic district," and, as part of that decision, they will most likely recommend to the SHPO that the district be nominated to the National Register.

## What Will This Mean?

Following the official nomination to the National Register, "Foggy Bottom Historic District" will be protected by D.C. Law 2-144.

## What Is D.C. Law 2-144?

D.C. Law 2-144 is the local ordinance that authorizes the designation and protection of historic landmarks and historic districts. It is the law that authorizes the existence of the Historic Preservation Review Board, and requires review of permits that affect historic buildings, both individual landmarks and buildings within historic districts. However, while the law applies to all historic landmarks listed in the D.C. Inventory, it applies only to historic districts that have been nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer to the National Register of Historic Places. If the historic district is only listed on the D.C. Inventory, it receives no protection from demolition or design review, nor are the buildings within the district eligible for federal preservation benefits.

## The Tangible Effects of Historic District Designation

Historic District designation will mean two things for property owners: the review of permits affecting historic buildings, and the possibility of federal tax benefits.

**Permit Review:** Specifically, this law requires that any exterior alteration, demolition, subdivision or new construction permits affecting structures within the boundaries of the historic district must be reviewed for appropriateness by the Historic Preservation Review Board. While this does impose a special review process, it ensures that the character of a building or district is maintained while allowing for rehabilitation and sensitive new design, a benefit to the public. These reviews are required by law.

**Federal Tax Benefits:** The second change concerns federal tax benefits that are available to owners of buildings determined to contribute to the historic character of the district. First, rehabilitations of in-

come-producing buildings may qualify under the federal Economic Recovery Tax Act (ERTA), allowing their owners to take federal *investment tax credits*. If a building is certified by the National Park Service as being a contributing element within a National Register Historic District, and if the building is income-producing, the owner may apply for a substantial tax credit if the rehabilitation is certified by the National Park Service. This program currently provides up to a 25% investment tax credit for substantial rehabilitations that follow the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. This is an optional program, and is entirely separate from the local reviews required by D.C. Law 2-144.

Further, if a building is cer-

tified as being a contributing element within a district, the owner is eligible for benefits that may result from the charitable donation of a *facade easement*. A facade easement requires the building's owner to make a legal promise to maintain the appearance of the facade in perpetuity. This "promise" is, in legal terms, a property easement, a right given to another person (or organization) and is recorded with the deed. The gift of this right to a qualified recipient is considered by the IRS as a charitable contribution. However, this program is currently being reviewed by the IRS and one should talk with both an accountant and a lawyer prior to donating a facade easement.

(continued next month)

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## Crime Watch

By Bob Alcorn

It is a pleasure to announce that more of you have been calling to alert me to developments, small crimes, and unusual happenings at night. Keep up the good work. If you think what you saw is important enough to call me for, then it is important.

I was recently advised by several people within the block that there was a robbery in one of the houses in the 2500 block of I Street. The residents were away and the robbers gained access through a back window. We were told that the thieves tried to gain access through doors but were unable to.

We have learned a new wrinkle to an old problem. A fairly large number of people, filled with what we would have to call Christian charity, have been letting street people in to sleep in basements and stairwells in various apartment houses. They are taking pity on them these cold nights and in spite of their better judgment, they do not want to see these poor souls suffer. Now those poor souls have quite a racket

going. Let one of them in to your building and he will then later on let in all of his friends so that before the night is over there is quite a convention. Those people not only could be street people but also they could be thieves masking as street people and you have let not only yourselves but also your neighbors in for a possible spree of robbing and other activities. Please reconsider your personal safety and that of your neighbors the next time you are tempted.

Lately we have also found that people are still letting in so-called workmen without checking to make sure they should be let in. People who are supposedly plumbers, elevator repairmen, electricians, painters, and phone repair people have entered not only apartment buildings with the idea of robbery but in some cases have gotten into private apartments by using this ruse. Do be more careful. Consult your resident manager before you open that door. You may save yourself or your neighbor from a harrowing experience.

People are still leaving things exposed in their autos. Sometimes I walk along the street and see televisions, cameras, purses, and all sorts of boxes,

suitcases, and clothing piles. These are not tourists but are cars which belong to our neighbors. Remember, it only takes a minute or two to break a window and steal away with things from the car. You may only think you'll be half an hour in your house and then take these things away. But . . . chances are, they will not be there when you return.

A number of people have reported people trying to steal their purses in the subway station at 23rd and I Streets. I have warned you several times that this is happening. The thieves seem to work in pairs. One does the distracting and the other grabs. Please watch out and take a firm hold on that purse. Don't let it dangle down your back as many women like to do. Remember in our area crime is just as bad during the afternoon hours as it is supposed to be at night, so watch out. Be safe, not sorry. See you at the next Foggy Bottom and ANC meetings?

## GW Theatre Production of "The Cave Dwellers" to Benefit Washington's Homeless

The George Washington University will present a fundraising performance of William Saroyan's *The Cave Dwellers* at 8 p.m. Wednesday, April 2 at the University's Marvin Center Theatre. Proceeds from this performance will be donated to Miriam's Kitchen, a GW community-sponsored charity for the homeless.

Written in 1985, *The Cave Dwellers* explores the plight of the homeless, and how lifestyle affects one's ability to love and care when there seems to be nothing left to give.

In an attempt to realistically portray the characteristics of street people, some of the actors have actually spent time in the garb and environment of their role models. According to the play's director Libby Kephart, "This is a show which deals with non-violent, gentle

people who live on the streets. They are not all violent as most people believe." In fact, "Many of them could be people just like you or me," says Kephart.

*The Cave Dwellers* opens at 8 p.m., on Tuesday, April 1 and runs through Sunday, April 6. For more information, call the GW Theatre box office, (202) 676-6178.

## Watergate Safeway Closes on Tuesday

During the remodeling of the Watergate Safeway, the store will be closed every Tuesday, probably through the month of June.

So — for the next couple of months — on Tuesday, go north, FB residents, to **Federal Supermarket** (1215 23rd Street) or east to **Columbia Plaza Gourmet** (which has a good selection of everyday foods). And they both are FBNews advertisers and deserve your support on Tuesday or any day!!

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## Chop Chop Chop

Mary Healy

The man chopping away at the ice after the recent snow storm was Thomas Folk, Resident Manager at the Potomac Plaza Cooperative Apartments. Mr. Folk saw people slipping and sliding on the ice in the vicinity of Virginia and New Hampshire Avenues. After he got off from work he went out and chopped and shovelled all the ice away from the curb cuts and from the small island between The Plaza

and the Watergate. He started at 5:10 PM (it was already dark) and he chopped and shovelled until 7:15 PM. Then he came back later and salted all the areas so they wouldn't freeze up again. Many people getting off work, going to the store, etc. stopped and thanked Mr. Folk for his efforts. For those of us who didn't happen by, let's all give him a big round of applause and a great big Thank You. That's the kind of community spirit which makes Foggy Bottom such a nice place to live.

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## Seminars on Stress Management for Women

Columbia Hospital for Women Medical Center, as part of its 1986 community education program, will sponsor two free seminars in April on stress management for women.

The programs will be held Tuesday, April 15 and 29, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the hospital's Teresa Adkins Conference Room, 2425 L Street, Northwest.

The first session will focus on some of the common stress-es women experience, and how stress affects women's physical and emotional health. The second session will teach participants how to manage stress in a way that promotes health and prevents illness.

The programs will be led by Lynn W. Brallier, R.N., M.S.N., C.S., Director of the Stress Management Center of Metropolitan Washington and author of *Successfully Manag-*

ing Stress. Ms. Brallier is in private practice as a psycho-therapist. She frequently lectures and conducts workshops on stress management for universities, hospitals, government agencies and business groups throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

Women throughout the Washington metropolitan area are invited to attend the seminars. Participants should register in advance by calling 202/293-2048.

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